

Anthrax victim was avid bowler, "excellent" league president

By Bob Cosgrove

On October 23, 2001, members of the 16-team Tuesday Morning Mixed league gathered for a special election at Parkland Bowl while in a great deal of shock and sadness. Their emotions had nothing to do with Vice President Kasper Chesnut, the individual who would become the league's new president that day. Instead, they were all about the man Chesnut would replace.



Thomas Morris Jr.

Ten days earlier, that man, Thomas Morris Jr. of Suitland, a distribution clerk at the Brentwood postal facility in Northeast Washington, noted that a woman working near him found a letter with powder in it. This was

two days before Senate Majority Leader Tom Daschle, D-South Dakota, received an anthrax-laced letter processed through the same facility.

On October 16, Morris started feeling achy and had headaches. Suspicious, the 28-year veteran of the U.S. Postal Service went to his doctor two days later for a throat culture but never received the results.

After Morris began vomiting on Sunday, October 21, he placed a 911 call, during which he requested that an ambulance take him to the hospital, and he also described symptoms consistent with the inhalation form of the disease.

By that evening, Morris was dead at age 55—the first of two inhalation anthrax victims from the Brentwood facility. His funeral was held October 26 at Maryland National Veterans Cemetery in Cheltenham, Md.

"Moe did an excellent job as president," said Carolyn Ivory, the league's secretary, using a popular nickname for her departed fellow officer. "He took his job seriously, and I could always go to him if I ever had a question. He loved the game and took great satisfaction from it. On the lanes, he always encouraged his teammates. He was just a good person."



Morris (left, back row) and his "Ladies and Gents" teammates: (from left) Leroy Martin, Arlene Barbee, and Brenda Thompson.

Thomas Lee Morris Jr. 3/2/46 – 10/21/01

We recently lost a beloved friend
Whom we very affectionately called "Moe."
He was kind, gentle, and thoughtful
And so wise beyond his years, you know.

He was Husband, Father, and Postal Worker,
Also a bowler with so much to give.
It's almost incomprehensible
That on this earth he no longer does live.

He left us all so suddenly,
It's hard to know exactly how to grieve.
But he took the time before he left—
And his legacy he did leave.

He left us a legacy of Love and Strength,
Woven with Kindness, Knowledge, and Power,
Which we can forever draw from
As his Spirit over us does tower.

His special essence is still touching us
To somehow find a way
To right the horrible wrongdoing
That was done that fated day.

If he could describe in exact detail
The agony he was going through,
Just maybe 'twas enough information
To give someone in authority a clue.

We just want to solve this mystery
And get to the bottom of the facts.
God knows Moe didn't have to go like this,
Struck down by ignorance, callousness, and anthrax.

Lord, help us in these dark, bleak days,
Give us strength and ease the excruciating pain.
God lead us in the right direction
To insure that Moe and others didn't die in vain.

And as we go about our lives,
Let us remember the Legacy of Love
That Moe so generously left for us
As he watches from Heaven, above.

— Elaine M. Ellis

EDITOR'S NOTE: The author is a member of the Tuesday Morning Mixed league at Parkland Bowl.